

TRIBUTE TO AARON DAVID  
HUDSPETH

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 19, 2007*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Aaron David Hudspeth a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Aaron has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Aaron has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Aaron David Hudspeth for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

INVESTIGATION NEEDED ABOUT  
TAPE DESTRUCTION

**HON. MARK UDALL**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 19, 2007*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, many Americans are rightly concerned about reports that the Central Intelligence Agency destroyed tapes documenting the interrogation of two suspected Al Qaeda terrorists.

This morning's newspapers report that the decision to destroy the tapes may have come after the matter had been discussed with legal advisers at the highest level in the Bush administration.

I do not know how accurate those reports may be. But I agree with an editorial in yesterday's *Gazette*, the daily newspaper of Colorado Springs, that Congress should investigate this matter.

In the words of the *Gazette*:

The House and Senate intelligence committees and other congressional committees have vowed to undertake investigations into the circumstances under which those tapes were destroyed. This is an appropriate use of the legislative branch's power to oversee the activities of the executive branch, especially when allegations of illegal activity are involved.

On Friday, however, the Justice Department asked the relevant congressional committees to postpone their investigations while preliminary investigations by the Justice Department and the CIA itself are under way. U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey also announced that the Justice Department would not comply with congressional requests for information at this time.

This stonewalling is inappropriate and only feeds suspicion. Congress is an equal branch of government under the Constitution. As such, it has full authority to conduct investigations into the activities of executive branch employees. \* \* \*

In a democratic system the government is supposed to serve the interests of the people and eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. But the people cannot maintain vigilance over "their" government if the government

is allowed to keep its arguably questionable activities secret.

I completely agree with that succinct summary of the situation, and urge the Intelligence Committees to proceed with their inquiries.

For the information of all our colleagues, I am attaching the complete text of the *Gazette's* editorial:

[From the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, Dec. 18, 2007]

OPEN GOVERNMENT—CONGRESS MUST  
INVESTIGATE TAPES' DESTRUCTION

Although the circumstances are suspicious surrounding a decision by the CIA to destroy videotapes of the interrogations of two al-Qaida suspects by CIA interrogators, it is virtually impossible to know whether those tapes contain evidence of "enhanced interrogation" techniques that rise to the level of torture. What is certain is that all the investigations into how and why those tapes were destroyed, and who ordered their destruction, should proceed with all deliberate speed.

Last week CIA Director Gen. Michael Hayden gave secret testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee regarding the hundreds of hours of videotaped interrogation of two men identified as members of al-Qaida, Abu Zubaydah and Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri. He acknowledged that the tapes had been destroyed sometime around 2005.

The House and Senate intelligence committees and other congressional committees have vowed to undertake investigations into the circumstances under which those tapes were destroyed. This is an appropriate use of the legislative branch's power to oversee the activities of the executive branch, especially when allegations of illegal activity are involved.

On Friday, however, the Justice Department asked the relevant congressional committees to postpone their investigations while preliminary investigations by the Justice Department and the CIA itself are under way. U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey also announced that the Justice Department would not comply with congressional requests for information at this time.

This stonewalling is inappropriate and only feeds suspicion. Congress is an equal branch of government under the Constitution. As such, it has full authority to conduct investigations into the activities of executive branch employees.

At the same time, the Justice Department is urging a federal judge not to hold a hearing into the destruction of the tapes. U.S. District Judge Henry Kennedy is presiding over a case involving 12 Yemeni prisoners being held at the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay on Cuba. Defense lawyers have urged such a hearing, noting that in 2005 Kennedy as the presiding judge in Zubaydah's and al-Nashiri's cases ordered that all evidence involving that case be preserved, and want to determine whether the destruction of the Zubaydah and al-Nashiri interrogation tapes violated that order.

It is possible for reasonable people to differ as to whether torture is ever justified. We agree with Sen. John McCain, who knows something about torture from his experience as a Vietnam prisoner of war, that the United States should maintain the moral high ground by abjuring torture. Most experienced interrogators also note that torture is not a reliable way to acquire accurate information.

A broad, informed debate on appropriate interrogation techniques is appropriate given widespread suspicion that the U.S. has used techniques that are tantamount to torture. The more information available, the

more informed any such discussion will be. That's why it is deplorable that the Justice Department wants to quash congressional and judicial inquiries into the destruction of videotapes that may—or may not—have documented the use of inappropriate techniques by government operatives.

In a democratic system the government is supposed to serve the interests of the people and eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. But the people cannot maintain vigilance over "their" government if the government is allowed to keep its arguably questionable activities secret.

CONGRATULATING STRATON  
KARATASSOS

**HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 19, 2007*

Mr. PICKERING. Madam Speaker, the athletic tradition at Mississippi State University has celebrated the lives and accomplishments of many student and staff leaders over the years. Recently another has been added to this list when Straton Karatassos was inducted into the Mississippi Athletic Trainers' Association Hall of Fame.

Straton has a lifetime of experiences and stories as a manager and trainer of athletic teams. While working with the Georgia Southern baseball team in 1973, he made his first visit to Mississippi State University for a game, and later that year returned as a graduate student. Now, three decades later, Straton has become inseparable from the MSU athletic family. He was named State's head trainer in 1981, later served as assistant athletic director for sports medicine, and now works as assistant athletic director for athletic development within the Bulldog Club.

While he is a native of Savannah, GA, we like to claim him as a true son of Starkville. He and his wife, Harriet, of Batesville, MS, are central to the Bulldog community, and he is as much part of the teams at Mississippi State as are the players.

Madam Speaker, I hope the Congress joins me in congratulating Straton Karatassos for a lifetime of service to sport and saluting him in his induction into the Mississippi Athletic Trainers' Association Hall of Fame.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR MEM-  
BERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD

SPEECH OF

**HON. TOM UDALL**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, the men and women who put on the uniform of the National Guard have acted with extreme bravery and integrity. Through the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, these soldiers have fought valiantly, without question and without reservations, and they embody the entire spirit of service.

In New Mexico, the National Guard has played an historic role in defending our Nation. Members of the New Mexico National Guard served as "Rough Riders" on San Juan Hill

with Teddy Roosevelt, served as prisoners of war at Bataan for horrendous years during World War II, and were deployed to Operation Desert Shield. Whether fighting during a time of war, assisting local and State law enforcement, or guarding our borders, New Mexico's National Guard stands "ready to fight" and accomplishes every mission it receives with distinction and with pride.

We in the House offer our unconditional support of these men and women, and I strongly support this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO KEITH MICHAEL  
GREENWOOD

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 19, 2007*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Keith Michael Greenwood a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Keith has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Keith has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Keith Michael Greenwood for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HONORING ROBERT F. RIORDAN

**HON. TODD TIAHRT**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 19, 2007*

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize my good friend, Robert F. Riordan, who is retiring after many years of active involvement in the Kansas business community. Bob is set to retire at the end of the year as the head of government relations for Black & Veatch, a leader in energy and water industries, and one of Kansas's largest businesses.

Bob is the eldest of Francis Xavier and Elizabeth Parris Riordan's four sons. He was raised in Wichita and Salina, KS. Despite the loss of his father when Bob was only 13 years old, he excelled in academics and sports while at Sacred Heart High School in Salina. At Sacred Heart, he was captain of the basketball team, a member of the 1958 American Legion State Champions, and valedictorian of his class.

Upon graduation from Sacred Heart in 1960, he attended the United States Naval Academy. Bob received his commission as an ensign in 1964 upon his graduation from Annapolis. He married Pamela Elizabeth Sutton, and together they have three children and three grandchildren, with two more grandchildren on the way. Bob served his country for 11 years while on active duty as a naval officer. He made numerous deployments to Vietnam and

saw much combat. His deployments included serving on the USS *Haverfield* (DER 393) and the USS *New Orleans* (LPH-11). While on active duty, he achieved the rank of lieutenant commander, a rank he made as an early selectee.

Wanting to spend more time with his family, Bob returned to Kansas after 11 years of service. Bob has always put his family first, and is a loving and caring husband and father. Throughout the years, he made financial and professional sacrifices to make sure that his relationship with his family came first.

Bob spent 3 years in Salina, working for Marymount College and the engineering firm of Wilson & Sons. While in Salina, he became interested in our Nation's energy policies and alternative energy. He started his own business for alternative energy in Salina before being appointed to a position with the then Kansas Department of Energy. After leaving his appointment, he moved to Lawrence, KS, and spent several years with the University of Kansas developing various forms of alternative energy. In 1982, Bob began doing government relations work for Kansas Power & Light, and was central to the development of their energy policies. While at Kansas Power & Light, Bob became vice president of operations, and helped to create a successful strategy to bring economically efficient power to Kansas.

In 1991, Bob left Kansas Power & Light to help create a fuel-cell company based out of Connecticut. He then came to work with Black & Veatch, starting with a project to build a power plant in Florida. He returned to Kansas in 1994 as head of Black & Veatch's government relations, and has continued in this position to the present day. Throughout his time at Black & Veatch, I have had the opportunity and privilege to work with Bob on a wide range of exciting projects.

Throughout his life, Bob has always been a man of integrity, honor, and loyalty. Bob's word is his pledge. More importantly, Bob will do something or take some action simply because it is the right thing to do. Bob never carries a grudge, and he never keeps score of what he has done for others. Through his service to his country, dedication to his career, and devotion to his family and friends, he exemplifies all that is best about Kansans.

I would like to wish Bob, and his wife Pam, all the best as they enter this new chapter of their lives.

IN SUPPORT OF THE JAMES  
ZADROGA 9/11 HEALTH AND COM-  
PENSATION ACT

**HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 19, 2007*

Mr. ROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, our Nation owes a debt of gratitude to those who selflessly rushed to Ground Zero to help their fellow citizens during and immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. These courageous American men and women thought of others first and themselves second. Truthfully, if it were not for the firefighters, rescue workers, emergency medical providers, and volunteers who helped in the days following 9/11, then the death toll may have been even higher. The healing process

would have been even slower. And the cleanup would have taken even longer.

Today, however, many of these rescue workers and volunteers suffer severe respiratory illnesses and diseases as a result of their exposure to toxic debris and materials at Ground Zero. To add insult to injury, the Bush administration has failed to provide them with adequate health care and, in some cases, actually challenged the cause of their illnesses, which doctor after doctor has diagnosed as stemming from the poisonous air at Ground Zero.

Our Nation can and must do far better by our heroes. That is why I strongly support and have cosponsored the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. This legislation would establish a World Trade Center Health program to provide medical monitoring, treatment, and compensation to emergency responders, recovery and cleanup workers, and other Ground Zero workers suffering serious diseases as a result of their efforts. It would also expand the number of individuals who are to be covered by such arrangements and creates a nationwide network of health care providers for treating victims residing outside the New York City area.

The American people understand that we have a duty to support our heroes—from those who saved lives in the aftermath of 9/11 to all of our service men and women returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's sad that we need legislation to force the Bush administration to do right by our heroes—but such is the situation we face. Thus, I will continue to fight for passage of the James Zadroga Act, will continue to seek increased funding to treat veterans and troops with post-traumatic stress disorder, severe brain injury, and other needs, and will work hard to elect a new President of the United States who will do more than pay lip service to the needs of our heroes.

Finally, I wish to applaud the good people at the Unsung Heroes Helping Heroes organization. While they never asked for anybody's praise, they have earned it—not only through their actions on 9/11, but also through their tireless advocacy on behalf of all those struggling with serious health problems caused by 9/11 and through their assistance to sick and injured 9/11 responders.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE  
INDUSTRY TO THE UNITED  
STATES ECONOMY

SPEECH OF

**HON. DAVID WU**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 17, 2007*

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 15—Recognizing the contributions of the Christmas tree industry to the United States economy. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution.

During the holiday season, it is appropriate that we consider this resolution. Many Americans participate in the tradition of Christmas and Christmas trees are an important part of this tradition. Many memories associated with Christmas include a beautiful natural tree decorated with lights and ornaments with gifts underneath, shared with family and friends.